

IN THE CLAIMS

Below is a listing of claims in accordance with rule 37 C.F.R. 1.121.

1-58. (CANCELLED)

59. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) In a computer system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the computer system comprising a storage device for storing the merchant level customer purchase information and a processor for placing the merchant level customer purchase information, a method for making targeting offers comprising the steps of:

receiving the merchant level customer purchase information;

organizing the merchant level customer purchase information within a predetermined organizational structure, wherein the predetermined organizational structure comprises a plurality of categories, each category comprising a plurality of sub-categories arranged in a hierarchy having a top-down taxonomy;

creating a customer preference based at least in part on the merchant level customer purchase information; and

forming a merchant level offer for a customer based on at least one of the customer preference and the merchant level customer purchase information.

60. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of extending the formed offer electronically through at least one of e-mail contact and a web page.

61. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of extending the formed offer through a medium comprising at least one of telephone calls and direct mail.

62. (CANCELLED)

63. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of placing the merchant level customer purchase information into at least one of the plurality of categories and plurality of sub-categories using the processor.

64. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the step of forming a merchant level offer comprises forming an offer for goods and services.

65. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level purchase information comprises at least an amount of purchase, a location of purchase, a merchant name, and a merchant category code.

66. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises merchant text strings including a purchase amount and the step of creating a customer preference comprises reviewing merchant text strings.

67. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of generating a customer score based on customer accounts prior to creating the customer preference.

68. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising updating the organizational structure when customer purchase information reaches a threshold level.

69. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 68, further comprising setting the threshold level to reflect at least one of a date range and a dollar range.

70. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the step of forming a merchant level offer comprises matching selected words or characters with words or characters contained within the customer purchase information.

71. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

72. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises stored value purchase information.

73. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the system comprising:

means for receiving the merchant level customer purchase information, wherein the customer purchase information includes text strings;

means for organizing the merchant level customer purchase information within a predetermined organizational structure, wherein the predetermined organizational structure comprises a plurality of categories, each category comprising a plurality of sub-categories arranged in a hierarchy having a top-down taxonomy; and

means for forming a merchant level offer for a customer based on a character search or word search of the text strings in the merchant level customer purchase information.

74. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, further transmission means for extending the formed merchant level offer electronically through at least one of e-mail contact and a web page.

75. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, further comprising transmission means for extending the formed merchant level offer through a medium comprising at least one of telephone calls and direct mail.

76. (CANCELLED)

77. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, further comprising processing means for placing the merchant level customer purchase information into at least one of the plurality of categories and plurality of sub-categories.

78. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, means for forming a merchant level offer comprise means for forming an offer for goods and services.

79. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level purchase information comprises at least an amount of purchase, a location of purchase, a merchant name, and a merchant category code.

80. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises merchant text strings including a purchase amount and the means for creating a customer preference comprises searching means for reviewing merchant text strings.

81. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, further comprising score generating means for generating a customer score based on customer accounts prior to creating the customer preference.

82. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, further comprising updating means for updating the organizational structure when customer purchase information reaches a threshold level.

83. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 82, further comprising means for setting the threshold level to reflect at least one of a date range and a dollar range.

84. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The system of claim 73, wherein the means for forming a merchant level offer comprises matching means for matching selected words or characters with words or characters contained within the customer purchase information.

85. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

86. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises stored value information.

87. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the method comprising the steps of:

creating classified offers;

sorting multiple types of received merchant level customer information according to transaction type;

storing the sorted merchant level customer information in a preference database;

combining sorted merchant level customer information relevant to each customer;

storing the combined merchant level customer information in a customer account database;

matching the combined merchant level customer information with classified offers to form a match table for ranking classified offers with respect to each account; and

accessing a link file having operator instructions for accessing information in a selected database including at least one of the preference database and the customer account database.

88. (CANCELLED)

89. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise character instruction information to indicate a number of characters to access in the selected database.

90. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions include word matching instructions for searching for a specific word in a text string in the selected database.

91. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instruction include instructions for searching an entire column for matching one or more words in the selected database.

92. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions include skipping at least a first word and matching two subsequent words in the selected database.

93. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise searching for a word representative of a geographic location in the selected database.

94. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise duration of processing instructions.

95. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

96. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 87, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises stored value information.

97. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the system comprising:
a classification tool for creating classified offers;

a preference engine comprising a plurality of processors for receiving and sorting multiple types of merchant level customer information based on transaction type;

a preference database for receiving and storing sorted merchant level customer information from the preference engine;

a combiner for combining merchant level sorted customer information and storing the information for each customer in a customer account database;

a match engine for combining the relevant merchant level customer information in the account database with classified offers from the classification tool in order to form a match table for ranking classified offers with respect to each customer account; and

a link file having operator instructions for accessing information in a selected database including at least one of the preference database and the customer account database.

98. (CANCELLED)

99. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise character instruction information to indicate a number of characters to access in the selected database.

100. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions include word matching instructions for searching for a specific word in a text string in the selected database.

101. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instruction include instructions for searching an entire column for matching one or more words in the selected database.

U.S. Application Serial No. 09/988,291
Attorney Docket No. 47004.000180

102. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions include skipping at least a first word and matching two subsequent words in the selected database.

103. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise searching for a word representative of a geographic location in the selected database.

104. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise duration of processing instructions.

105. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 97, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

106. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 97, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises stored value information.

107. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 67, wherein the step of generating a customer score, includes generating multiple customer scores for a single customer, the multiple customer scores for the single customer each being respectively associated with a different merchant.

108. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 67, wherein the step of generating a customer score, includes generating multiple customer scores for a single customer, the multiple customer scores for the single customer each being based on purchases by the single customer from different merchants.

+
U.S. Application Serial No. 09/988,291
Attorney Docket No. 47004.000180

109. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 81, wherein the score generating means generates multiple customer scores for a single customer, the multiple customer scores for the single customer each being respectively associated with a different merchant.

110. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein the plurality of sources are different merchants.

111. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, wherein the plurality of sources are different merchants..

112. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with a respective count value, each count value indicating the number of customers that have had activity within the particular category or sub-category.

113. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 112, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with a respective percentage value, each percentage value indicating the percentage of customers that have had activity within the particular category or sub-category.

114. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 113, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with respective different merchants.

115. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 112, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with respective different merchants.

116. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with a respective percentage value, each percentage value indicating the percentage of customers that have had activity within the particular category or sub-category.

117. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 59, wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with respective different merchants.

118. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 117, wherein the categories and sub-categories relate to the volume of purchases made at a particular merchant and not to any particular item purchased at a particular merchant.

119. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 59, further including associating the categories and sub-categories with a score.

120. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 119, wherein the sub-categories comprise respective merchants.

121. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 119, wherein the score includes at least one selected from the group of a count value and a percentage value.

122. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 119, wherein the score is based on customer purchase information that is associated with a particular category or sub-category.

123. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 122, wherein the score associated with a particular category or sub-category is based on at least one of:
the total dollar amount of purchases by a customer in a particular category or sub-category; and

the number of purchases in a particular category or sub-category.

124. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 123, wherein the score includes at least one selected from the group of a count value and a percentage value.

125. **(PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED)** The method of claim 124, wherein the score is a count value, and the count value represents a count of the number of customers who have had some activity within a particular category or sub-category in a particular period of time.

+
U.S. Application Serial No. 09/988,291
Attorney Docket No. 47004.000180

126. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 125, wherein the period of time is a year.

127. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 124, wherein the score is a percentage value, and the percentage value represents a percentage of customers who have had some activity within a particular category or sub-category in a particular period of time.

128. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 119, wherein the score is a count value, and the count value represents a count of the number of customers who have had some activity within a particular category or sub-category in a particular period of time.

129. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 119, wherein the score is a percentage value, and the percentage value represents a percentage of customers who have had some activity within a particular category or sub-category in a particular period of time.

130. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) In a computer system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the computer system comprising a storage device for storing the merchant level customer purchase information and a processor for placing the merchant level customer purchase information, a method for making targeting offers comprising:

receiving the merchant level customer purchase information;
organizing the merchant level customer purchase information within a predetermined organizational structure, wherein the predetermined organizational structure comprises a plurality of categories, each category comprising a plurality of sub-categories arranged in a hierarchy having a top-down taxonomy;

creating a customer preference based at least in part on the merchant level customer purchase information; and

U.S. Application Serial No. 09/988,291
Attorney Docket No. 47004.000180

forming a merchant level offer for a customer based on at least one of the customer preference and the merchant level customer purchase information;

further comprising updating the organizational structure when customer purchase information reaches a threshold level, and comprising setting the threshold level to reflect at least one of a date range and a dollar range; and

wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with a respective count value, each count value indicating the number of customers that have had activity within the particular category or sub-category; and

wherein at least a plurality of the categories or sub-categories are associated with a respective percentage value, each percentage value indicating the percentage of customers that have had activity within the particular category or sub-category.

131. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 130, wherein the categories and sub-categories relate to the volume of purchases made at a particular merchant and not to any particular item purchased at a particular merchant.
